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Election 2004

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ELECTION

04



4,144 votes. That's all that separated Al Gore and George W. Bush in Iowa in the 2000 election. That's all that delivered our state to Gore and the Democratic Party.

4,144 votes. Over six times that many students call Iowa State home. The College of Engineering alone has more students.

Coming down the homestretch of the 2004 election, Iowa is again a swing state in a tight presidential race. Winning this state is crucial to winning the presidential election. And winning over the students of Iowa State, many who didn't vote four years ago, is essential to winning Iowa. Three campus organizations, driven by three student leaders, will have the biggest say in who ISU students support at the polls.

Meet the three students who will elect the next president.

PHOTOS BY: David Osterhaus

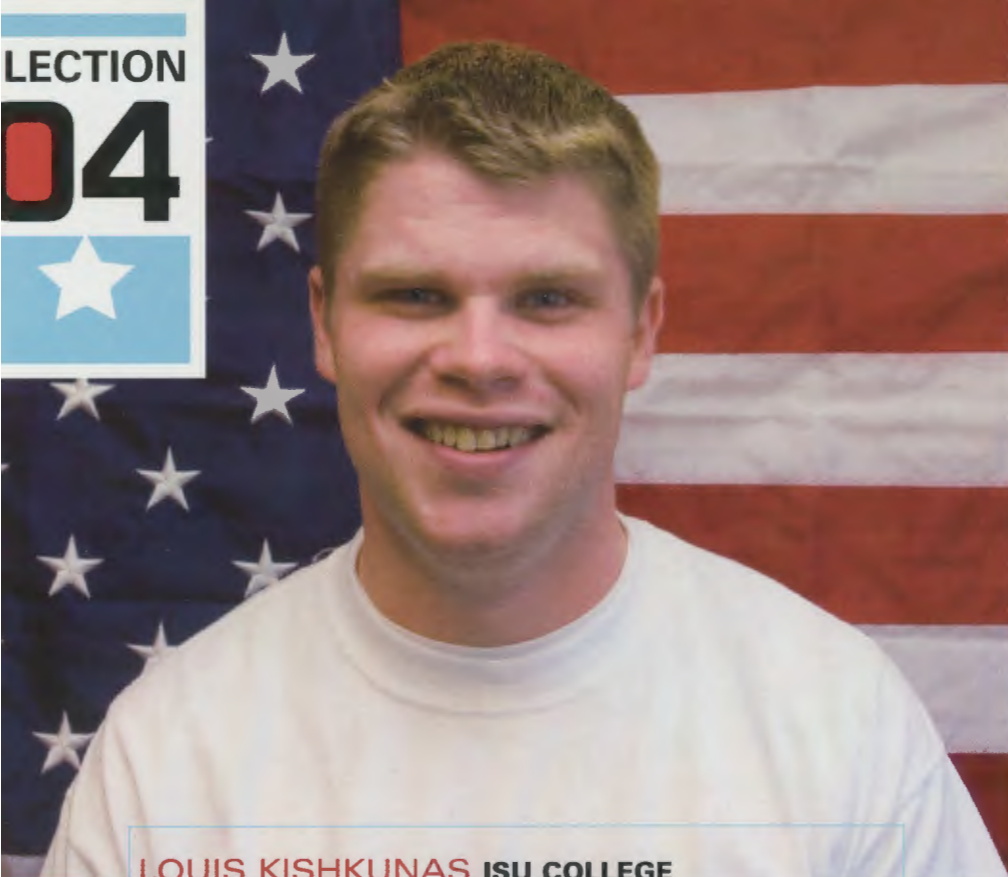
X ISU college
republican

MAKE THEM PAY ATTENTION TO US.
**REGISTER
TO VOTE**
NOVEMBER

VOTE

X new voters project

X ISU democrats



LOUIS KISHKUNAS ISU COLLEGE REPUBLICANS

STORY BY: Sarah Hanson

It was a scorching summer afternoon in the small town of Glenwood, Iowa. The local Pizza Hut quickly became a full house as the community's residents crowded through the doors to listen to Greg Ganske, a congressional candidate, discuss his campaign. After having his fill of pizza, 8-year-old Louis Kishkunas sat intently with his grandpa Lou and absorbed every word. With each passing minute, he became more engrossed with the message. Following the speech was a question and comment period, and as the adults in the audience spoke, a light bulb went off in little Louis' head. He boldly raised his hand. "Why don't you come up with something that you stand for and advertise it on posters around town?" suggested Louis. "That way, people will know your name when they see it on the ballot." The audience was shocked that Louis realized the importance of name recognition in political races.

This story has made Louis a legend in Glenwood. Even as an 8-year-old, Louis was already discovering his love of politics. And his passion still makes him stand out among his peers today. Louis, junior in political science, is currently the president of the ISU College Republicans, a result that is not all that surprising to those who remember the little boy in that crowded Pizza Hut.

To say the least, Louis' childhood wasn't typical. "Growing up, I tagged along to all of the political meetings that my grandpa went to." This interest set him apart from most boys, who are more interested in video gaming than politicking. And this passion didn't wane as he grew older. Throughout his high school days, Louis was extensively involved with campaigns for politicians like Dan Quayle, Bob Dole, and Chuck Grassley.

Today, in addition to being president of the College Republicans, Louis is also the Chief of Staff for GSB. He has also been involved in the Air Force through the ROTC since his freshman year. It would be easy to imagine that Louis came to Iowa State and got involved in all of these organizations to build his resume. But spend some time with him and it's clear he's after something – but not status or image. He's determined to let nothing stop him from making a face for the Republicans on campus.

Louis' involvement in so many activities makes organization and planning essential. "When things get busy, it's all about finding a balance." Reluctantly, however, Louis admits a dark secret – sometimes he slips away from being his organized, meticulous self and forgets the simple things in life. "It'll be 10:00 and I'll think, 'Crap! I forgot to eat dinner!' It drives me nuts," he says, as he holds his head in his hands and grins.

When asked about his ambitions after graduation, Louis responds quickly by quoting a line from his favorite movie. "You mean besides do two chicks at the same time?" Then he laughs. And laughs and laughs. His joke is followed by a serious tone. "To be honest, I would like to serve. Whether in the Air Force, or in politics, or whatever. Because there is no nobler position than touching everyone's life by serving." After a brief pause, Louis continues. "In reality, though, I don't really know what I'll do after the Air Force. I could see myself as a political candidate or I could be the guy helping the candidate. Do I want to shake hands or be the guy shaking hands? I don't really know." e



Even as an 8-year-old, Louis was already discovering his love of politics.



GABE WHITAKER ISU

DEMOCRATS

STORY BY: Bridget Campbell

It's 1986 in Colorado Junction, Iowa. People gather along the scenic main road in excitement for the summer parade that will include candidates running for the U.S. House of Representatives. A humble, red-and-white Ford truck passes, decorated with posters for Democratic candidate John Whitaker. The posters are eye-catching because of the bright, John-Deere color scheme. In the back of the pickup bed, a boy's life is changing at this very moment. As Gabe Whitaker throws Tootsie Rolls as far as his 4-year-old arms can to his father's supporters, it becomes a part of him. His interest in politics is then and there inspired.

The boy, now 22, sits in his makeshift office that is merely a desk against a cubical wall. Following in the footsteps of a long line of political activists in his family, Gabe is now the president of the ISU Democrats, a seat he earned after serving as secretary for the previous two years. For him it wasn't a question whether or not to become active in politics. His father and grandfathers have set the example for him.

Although his dad did not win the U.S. House seat in 1986, the Whitaker family is still very politically involved in Gabe's hometown of Hillsboro, Iowa and has been since the late 1800s. Formerly the county supervisor, Gabe's dad is currently a state representative as well as the president of the Iowa Farmers Union.

Gabe's sense of leadership was instilled in him before he could realize a different way of life. "Being part of my dad's elections has inspired my interest in politics. I'm not sure if it was the attention at that age or the fact that these people had the power to change things, but that's how I got started," he says with a smile. "I wouldn't know how to not be political." Gabe's trip to Washington, D.C. in 11th grade to petition Congress about agricultural issues also sparked his interest. "I went there expecting to have fun seeing all the tourist attractions. But the fun wasn't there – it was in seeing how the government worked, and it solidified my decision to get involved in politics."

Because of his passion for making changes and his approachable attitude, he is leading the ISU Democrats into a very busy election season. Working closely with the Story County Democrats, Gabe is putting much time and effort into persuading the community to vote democratic in November. "I really believe in the platform of the party. I'm a proactive thinker, and I believe in things like pro-choice, good health care, and public education."

Not only is he involved in making a difference on campus, but he also takes his love of this country further. Gabe is a member of the National Guard, which only occupies two weekends a month and one week a year for him. Gabe is currently training to be an officer, a decision that meant he had to leave his original battalion of the past five years, the 224th Engineer Battalion. "They are shipping out to Iraq in December, and I just hate the fact that I won't be with them."

Although he feels going overseas to serve is something he must do in order to fully grasp the politics of this country, Gabe knows there will be future chances as he intends to stay in the military until retirement. "I like being able to hold myself to a higher standard," he says of his interest in becoming an officer. Like most other college students, Gabe is uncertain of his future. But he knows he wants to make a difference. "I want to make an impact on this country, and I think I'll do that. I'm just not sure how yet." **e**

I wouldn't know how to not be political.



ELECTION

04



CHELSEA LEPLEY VOLUNTEER

NEW VOTERS PROJECT

STORY BY: Patrick O'Bryan

By now, nearly every student at Iowa State has seen the wristbands. They're red-and-white striped and adorn the arms of clipboard-carrying young people. These people are part of the army that is the local branch of the New Voters Project, and they're everywhere.

The group is, in a relatively complex way, an offshoot of the Iowa Public Interest Research Group. For the last three years, Chelsea Lepley has been the on-campus presence of the Iowa PIRG. And while the Iowa State New Voters Project has brought in its own campus organizer, has at least five interns, and proudly boasts over 150 volunteers, you might think of Chelsea as the de facto spiritual leader of the whole group.

It would be too easy to simply write Chelsea, a senior in English, off as

Chelsea is the girl who raised her hand in class not to answer questions, but to remark on the bias of the teacher.



Make Them Pay Attention To Us.

just another liberal, hippie activist. She doesn't wear make-up. She has large tattoos on strange parts of her body. She has a ring running through the middle of her nose.

But ignoring Chelsea isn't as easy as you would like, if for no other reason than the person she is most concerned with is you. She doesn't talk about George W. Bush or John Kerry or Iraq or Third World debt. She talks a lot about democracy. She talks about having a voice, about making a difference at the very bottom level of the system, where progress is sometimes so slow that it doesn't seem to happen at all.

The glamorous life of the public servant.

Chelsea is the girl in high school who wasn't all too concerned with prom. She is the girl who raised her hand in class not to answer questions, but to remark on the bias of the teacher. In eighth grade she joined the Young Woman's Feminist Corps. She started a Gay/Straight Alliance at her high school in tenth grade (that her father made her quit twice). By eleventh grade she was giving an in-service to the high school teachers about cultural sensitivity. She is the first to admit her activism has probably made her more annoying than anything else, and her smile shows how proud she is of that.

Conversation with Chelsea can be dizzying. She is extremely articulate and can easily talk about any issue. She begins talking about Iowa State students needing to vote and before long she's commenting on the wrongs of the prison system in America. She talks about cultivating democracy and before long is speaking almost entirely in acronyms – the NVP, PIRG, and GOTV, to name just a few. For Chelsea, however, it's all about one big issue: awareness. She firmly believes in a logical process of raising awareness of the issues surrounding us all. She is that annoying little angel on our shoulder reminding us of what we really should be doing.

It's not that Chelsea doesn't have her own ideas about who she wants to win this election. She does. But she is extraordinarily humble, and her honesty about herself, the world around her, and her mission is Buddha-like.

"I am extremely lucky. I know that. The fact that I'm here doing this, and I did nothing to deserve it, is unbelievable. And I know I can use it to improve the world."

Right now, the process starts with registering to vote. This, Chelsea believes, is the simple step that will lead not only people of college age, but the entire human race, into a better, less apathetic world. Registering leads to commitment, which leads to thinking about candidates, which leads to voting, which leads to thinking about a better world.

As the November election approaches, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Commercials on TV tell you how much the other candidate resembles evil. Talking heads spin every political speech and public utterance into one more reason not to care. But all Chelsea wants you to do is fill out a little piece of paper and change the world. **e**

Reasons to VOTE

- 1 To make a difference.
- 2 What else do you do on Tuesdays?
- 3 You get free cookies.
- 4 We may have lied about the cookies.
- 5 Because George Bush sucks.
- 6 Because John Kerry sucks.
- 7 Because you think Ralph Nader actually has a chance.
- 8 To feel old and mature.
- 9 The endless election coverage will mean something to you.
- 10 Utilize your constitutional right.
- 11 Because nobody else does.
- 12 You only get to do it once every four years, so it must be important.
- 13 Because you care.
- 14 Because we took the time to write this list.
- 15 We know where you live and we'll hunt you down if you don't.

**X**

**make your mark
and vote in the
2004 election.**